



U.S. REPRESENTATIVE RON LEWIS STAYING IN TOUCH



ANNUAL CONSTITUENT SURVEY

SPRING 2002

Dear Friends:

The September 11 terrorist attacks and anthrax attacks that followed changed our lives. However, we are newly reassured that America is ready to answer challenges brought by enemies. We are improving safety and security at home and our troops are serving us well abroad.

Although Congress has focused on security, we are also addressing domestic issues, such as welfare reform and continuing efforts to improve education. A new farm bill was signed into law last month, and as the year continues, Congress hopes to finish work on energy, Medicare and Social Security.

Your input on all these topics is certainly appreciated. **Please complete and return the constituent survey by mail or via my new website: www.house.gov/ronlewis.** Thank you for taking the time to share your views. God Bless America,

Ron Lewis



Rep. Lewis meets Washington County residents at a recent Open Office Hour in Springfield.

NATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE:

Wartime Budget Meets Defense Needs

For the past few years that I've been sending this newsletter, I never once thought I would have to write about an attack on our country and how we are fighting a war against terrorism.

That, however, is where we find ourselves, facing new challenges and an enemy different from any other. On the military side, we need to do everything it takes to keep our troops well equipped and trained. **Our nation is committed to fighting terrorism and stopping future terrorist attacks. But we know this can't be done without a cost.**

Congress is working with President Bush to plan and implement a responsible and effective wartime budget. **Having a wartime budget means, more than ever, that we must stick to our priorities.**

It may not be on the news every day, but our troops remain in danger and at risk. They are still fighting, disarming dangerous mines and explosives and working with the international security force.

ment will be, but we are working with our allies and intelligence agencies to determine what's next.

Because we don't know what this war will bring, Congress is deciding defense spending in two parts to increase flexibility and provide time to evaluate needs. **The first defense bill the House approved this spring is the largest since 1990.** This legislation contains \$7.3 billion for counter-terrorism efforts. Members of the military will also receive a 4.1 percent pay increase and \$10 billion for military housing and other military construction.

The bill provides more funding for readiness, new weapons and training for troops. The situation our military faces now makes that modernization effort even more important. **Our own Fort Knox will play a role in Army modernization, taking the lead in developing lighter and more mobile armed vehicles and in urban combat training.**

In the coming weeks, Congress will consider the second national security bill. This one will allocate a \$10 billion contingency fund for the next steps in the war on terrorism and the continuing costs of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Defense and security are not possible without cost, and the money this takes is more than we have been spending. We can't fight this war without resources. Those, our troops and the plans our military leaders set, will make the difference in our ultimate success against terrorism.

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Thousands more members of our military are in the area, ready to act anywhere in the world when needed. We don't know what their next assign-

New Farm Bill Increases Agriculture Safety Net

Another bill signed into law recently by President Bush is the Farm Bill we approved in Congress. This legislation was much-needed by our farmers and for the nation's food security.

The Farm Security Act regularizes the emergency assistance we have been providing to farmers for the past several years. By making this assistance part of the regular farm programs, the extra aid will be more predictable. Just as Freedom to Farm was an improvement on farm policy in 1996, the new Farm Bill builds on those successful policies and adds the new low-price protections.

Farmers have faced continued low prices. Until prices recover, this bill gives farmers the assurance that help is available. It also keeps the assistance within our budget and our trade agreements. With the new Farm Bill and continued efforts to open new world markets for our farm goods, Kentucky farmers will have an improved outlook.

Many farmers also continue to be concerned about tobacco's future. **Interested tobacco farmers are invited to attend the tobacco meeting I will host in Cave City later this month. Details on the meeting can be found on Page 3.**



Rep. Lewis talks with Warren County residents about one of the lock and dams on the Barren River.

HOMELAND SECURITY:

Making our Airports, Borders and Country Safer

One thing we have certainly learned since September 11 is that we must take steps to make our nation more secure and increase the ability of our intelligence agencies to detect terrorism. The terrorist attacks revealed some shortcomings, and Congress has been approving changes that improve the homeland security our government provides.

AT OUR AIRPORTS

The new Transportation Security Administration is implementing new baggage and passenger screening requirements at all airports. Federal air marshals will be on more flights, and more law enforcement personnel will be at airports.

We are moving forward, but implementing all of these changes takes time and careful planning. The increased security and screening comes with a cost we will have to cover, but it is worth it.

Congress will be overseeing the new security measures and new workers placed at airports. We need to make sure the changes are effective and truly enhance the safety the public deserves.

AT OUR BORDERS

We are proud to be a nation of immigrants. However, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had not done an effective job identifying those who pose a threat to us and keeping terrorists out of our country.

President Bush recently signed into law a bill that tightens our borders and makes our visa policies for tourists, students and other visitors stricter. The law requires the INS to start a new entry and exit tracking system so we know who has overstayed their visas. Additional INS investigators and inspectors are being hired, as well as border patrol agents.

Congress is also working on plans to restructure the INS. We need to separate the agency's job of helping those who follow the legal process to become new citizens and its job of finding and keeping out of our country those who are breaking the law or who want to harm us.

IMPROVING INTELLIGENCE

A vital part of homeland security is maximizing our capabilities to learn what potential enemies are

planning. Our law enforcement and intelligence agencies must be able to share information and use what they know to stop attacks.

The effort to increase our intelligence is ongoing. In terms of law enforcement, additional FBI agents have been deployed to investigate suspected terrorists and terrorism organizations. The FBI is also restructuring the organization so that it can be more effective in preventing terrorism.

FIRST RESPONDERS/BIOTERRORISM

From Vice-President Cheney to the FBI director, many have warned that future attacks on our nation are likely. While we hope we can stop such attacks, we need to be ready in case they happen.

The new Office of Homeland Security is helping to coordinate response plans with states and local officials. Funding has been set aside to help them become more prepared. President Bush just signed our bioterrorism and public health bill. Its provisions include help for health personnel, vaccine research, medicine stocking and protection for food and drinking water supplies.

Where I Stand

Ban On Human Cloning
H.R. 2505

✓ YES

Energy Policy, Oil in Alaska
H.R. 4

✓ YES

National Defense Spending
H.R. 2586

✓ YES

Improving Veterans' Health Care
H.R. 3447, H.R. 4514 and H.R. 4085

✓ YES

Building on Welfare Reform
H.R. 4737

✓ YES

Farm Security Act
H.R. 2646

✓ YES

Responsible Wartime Budget
H. Con. Res. 353

✓ YES

Commitment to Social Security
H. Con. Res 282

✓ YES

Pension and Accounting Reforms
H.R. 3762 and H.R. 3763

✓ YES

Tax Relief Provides Stability to Economy;

Making the Cuts Permanent is Next Step

While the events of September 11 kept the economy a little shaky the past year, things appear to be turning around. The tax relief we approved last year, which added more than \$50 billion to the economy, is one reason why things did not become even worse.

The reduction in tax liability came at a good time. **Advance rebates, coupled with reduced tax rates and an increased child tax credit, made a difference for every Kentucky taxpayer.** The tax relief eliminated the tax burden for many low-income taxpayers this year.

The federal government can take less from working families and still have the means to fund our national defense, security and other needs. **In turn, families and small businesses can make better decisions on how their money is used, whether they save, spend or invest it.** Their decisions, taken together, help the economy grow.

The terrorist attacks did affect the economy, but with things looking up, we need to keep moving in the right direction. Congress extended benefits for an additional 13 weeks for those who are still looking for new jobs. In order to help create jobs, the same legislation creates incentives for businesses to invest

in new machines and equipment now instead of waiting. More investment means more jobs.

Over the next few years, tax rates will continue to go down across the board, and the marriage tax penalty will be abolished. **However, unless Congress makes the change permanent, everyone will go right back to paying higher taxes in nine years.**

We passed legislation in the House that makes the tax relief permanent. This way, an arcane budget rule doesn't derail the tax relief we intended.

Making the tax cuts permanent means that low-income taxpayers will not see their tax rate jump five percent when we change the calendar after 2010. It ensures that families won't have the child tax credit they receive cut in half.

For the purpose of long-term planning and fairness, we have to make sure this doesn't happen and that the marriage penalty and death taxes, which will be gone by then, don't come back to life.

Making tax cuts permanent means we won't wake up in 2011 and find one of our largest tax decreases has become our largest tax increase.

2002 CONSTITUENT SURVEY

Please answer the following questions and include any comments. Then, cut out, fold and return your responses, making sure to include your return address.

Two members of the household can respond, one on each side of the answer choices. **Or, complete the survey online at www.house.gov/ronlewis/**

1. Please rank these public policy issues in order of importance to America's future (1 being most important).

Person One	Person Two
_____ Strengthening Social Security _____	
_____ National Debt Relief _____	
_____ Homeland Security _____	
_____ Medicare Prescription Benefit _____	
_____ Strengthen the Economy _____	
_____ Increasing National Defense _____	
_____ Energy Security _____	
_____ Other _____	

2. In what area is the greatest effort by the federal government needed to enable us to fight terrorism more effectively?

_____ Improve our intelligence capabilities _____	
_____ Do more for airport security _____	
_____ Strengthen border security _____	
_____ Increase the FBI's accountability _____	
_____ Undertake more military action _____	

3. Should the United States plan military action against Iraq and/or other nations that may be harboring terrorists?

Person One	Person Two
_____ Yes _____ No	_____ Yes _____ No

4. Should Congress make the tax relief approved last year permanent rather than allowing it to expire after 10 years?

_____ Yes _____ No	_____ Yes _____ No
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5. Later this summer Congress will be debating plans to modernize Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit. What amount of premium would you be willing to pay for Medicare prescription drug coverage?

_____ No premium _____	
_____ \$15 per month _____	
_____ \$30 per month _____	
_____ \$50 per month _____	
_____ I do not want Medicare drug coverage _____	

Comments:

Place
First-Class
Postage
Here

(Please Print)

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Mark Your Calendar!

Tobacco Farmers' Meeting

Due to the renewed interest in new tobacco buyout proposals, all interested farmers are invited to my forum in June so we can discuss these issues.

Tobacco Farmers' Forum

Saturday, June 29

8:30 – 10:30 a.m. CT

**Cave City Convention Center
West Hall**



Rep. Lewis spoke about Social Security at the convention for Kentucky's chapter of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) in Owensboro.

Sign Up for E-Mail News!

If you want to receive regular e-mail updates on what Congress is doing and how it affects you in Kentucky, please sign up at my website:

www.house.gov/ronlewis/

The monthly e-newsletter helps you keep in touch and lets you know about current issues and useful links online to use to track Congress.

Making Sure No Child Is Left Behind

A priority for President Bush is education reform. I supported his original education plan, but could not vote for the final bill that came through Congress. That said, the new No Child Left Behind law still brings plenty of much-needed change to education.

The federal government has sent more and more money to states for education, but problems such as poor performance and an achievement gap for disadvantaged students show that **money alone cannot solve all education problems.**

Without accountability, local control, parental choice and involvement and good teachers, our children's education will not improve, no matter how much we spend.

All the answers don't come from the federal government, but **the No Child Left Behind Act addresses some federal shortcomings** in the system and gives states and local schools new tools to help them educate children.

The new law gives every local school district in Kentucky the ability to allocate half the federal funds it receives among programs the

school district chooses without needing federal permission. School administrators in Taylor County, for example, know where the money is needed better than an administrator in Washington, D.C. who probably has never been to that school district.



Rep. Lewis visited with children at the Vaughn Reno Starks Community Center in Elizabethtown and discussed the importance of education.

Under No Child Left Behind, federal programs are consolidated. Schools will receive more help to recruit and train teachers.

While I believe we should have provided more school choice for parents whose children are trapped in failing schools, reforms allow parents to transfer

children to better performing public or charter schools as soon as their public school is identified as failing.

This summer, Congress will address another aspect of education reform: changes to special education programs funded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. If there is one thing local school administrators have said over the years, it is that **the federal government needs to meet its funding commitment to IDEA.** I agree and hope we can make progress.

What "Works" for Welfare: New Bill Builds on Reform

In 1996, Congress completely changed the direction of welfare programs. Rather than fostering dependency, today's programs emphasize finding work and self-sufficiency.

We passed a bill last month that builds on the success by giving states more options to coordinate services and asking recipients to work more hours.

In Kentucky, the number of people receiving welfare has been cut in half since 1996. There are fewer children living in poverty. Emphasis on work and state flexibility are two reasons why welfare reform is working. Because welfare cases have been cut in half, states have more money available for services such as child care.

As we worked on the bill in the subcommittee I serve on, I met with people across the district who provide welfare services and those who shared their welfare success stories. I am convinced we are on the right track with reform.

Our new bill increases the number of recipients participating in work activities and the amount of time spent in work or training. We're trying new ways to strengthen families and provide access to education. Moving forward with reform helps more Kentuckians become independent.

Welfare Reform Success

Child Poverty Reduced:

Since 1996, nearly 3 million children have been lifted from poverty across the country, and in KY, the child poverty rate also declined.

Independence Through Work:

Increases in child care and education options help more welfare recipients find jobs so that they can move toward independence.

New Lewis Website Connects Second District to Congress

Have Internet Access?

Please check out my new website,
<http://www.house.gov/ronlewis>
At the expanded site, you can find the following resources:

- Updates on current legislative issues
- Votes taken in the House
- Search bills introduced in Congress
- Answers to questions asked often about federal programs and agencies
- Information for students

Contacting Your Congressional Offices

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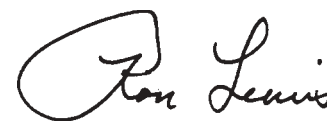
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